

841 piece of cloth. (Among the peoples of the Xingu in Brazil she is made to wear her hair over her face, and she is kept from the sight of men.) Whether during this period special initiatory rites are performed I was not able to find out. This part of Yaruro culture is considered to be in the women's domain, and, being a man, I was kept from delving into it.

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MARRIAGE

527 The Yaruros are poor in social ceremonies. Anciently they may have practiced a great many of them but today social life is comparatively simple.

885 When a boy is ready to marry he may approach his father, or as a matter of fact, the father may approach the son. In any case he is sent to the shaman, who informs him that now he should be ready to assume the duties of a man, and proceeds to instruct him in the nature of those duties. He is told that he must love and cherish his wife; supply her plentifully with food, clothing, ornaments, and children; that he must never use harsh words toward her and that he must take care of her when she is sick; that he must never quarrel with her family, with whom he is expected to live; and of particular importance, that he must remember to take care of his father-in-law and mother-in-law. All of this is ordained by Kuma.

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584 The shaman will then approach the boy's uncle who has a marriageable daughter. No special ceremony seems to take place. The boy simply goes to live with the wife's family and assumes his duties of taking care of her as well as of his parents-in-law.

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SICKNESS AND DEATH

751 Not much material was available on sickness. It must be remembered that the Yaruros have been in contact with European ideas for several centuries and that they understand the use of medicine for the cure of a specific illness.

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753 Nevertheless, Kiberoh, the evil night spirit, is in some fashion associated with illness. If Kiberoh enters the body of a person, the latter will become ill. In such cases the only cure is the intercession of Kuma, who can be called upon to help by the shaman or musico, a term adapted from the Spanish to describe the singing shaman.

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755 The sick person is laid on the ground with his head pointing to the east. At sundown the shaman will stand to the north of the sick person and will proceed to sing, accompanying himself with the rattle. The rest of the people, with the exception of any woman in her menstrual period, line up behind the shaman and sing and dance as they generally do during any of the shamanistic performances. If they indulge in any dancing, however, they do not go around a

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return to earth and guide the community. In this manner, Ku'maⁿ is a center of gravity of the Yaruro ideological life. She is the center of a communications network which ties the Yaruro of the hither-world, those of the other-worlds, and the gods all in one continuous system of personal and social relations. This is somewhat the position of the spokesman or 'capitan' in the community life of the Yaruro, though he has proportionally much less influence in his village than Ku'maⁿ has in her universe.

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In sum, the gods and the dead are conceptualized as continuous with those of us on earth. Conceptually they appear to constitute the two highest steps in the age levels: infant, child, young adult, elder, the dead, and the gods. The last four classes are increasingly instrumental in teaching the ethics of living in tranquility, of respect and deference to one's spouse and to all members of one's people, and in teaching the values of the community. They exhort but never compel the community to follow these ideals. These precepts are followed not only among the egalitarian gods in their autonomous other-world communities, but in the personal and social relations between the gods and the hither-world *pumé*. The relations between men and gods, the communication between the hither and other-worlds, the cosmography itself, all show quite clearly that there is no separation of "natural" and "supernatural" as discrete classes of events. The cosmos, society, and man are a single system in Yaruro thought.

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The nexus through which the flow of life in the other-world and the ongoing rhythm of daily life in the hither-world are meshed into a single system is the religious ceremony, the *tonghé*. Some description of the *tonghé* will afford us further insight into Yaruro ideology.

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During the night-long *tonghés*, the entire community sits behind the shaman, ranged roughly by age levels. The women sit to his right, the men to his left. At dusk he begins to sing as he starts his journey to the land of Ku'maⁿ through the dark, cold land of Kiberó, the toad who gave man fire. In hundreds of improvised verses and melodies, he describes his journey, and then, after his arrival about midnight, his adventures in the lands of Ku'maⁿ and subsequently of the other gods. In each verse, the shaman sings an intonation which the entire community repeats in an identical antiphon. Thus the full experience of the shaman is transmitted to and shared by every member of the community. All is public; there is no secret knowledge. The shaman urges his people to sing with him and the other-worldly beings, to share in the responsibilities and joys of the community in supporting their individual members whether the shaman in his journey or the sick person for whom the *tonghé* may be being held. At the same time, in Ku'maⁿ land, he urges the other-worldly beings to come to advise his people and teach them. Later, the verses are no longer sung by the shaman, but rather by the dead and the gods who arrive in the husk of the shaman which he has left behind as a channel of communications for the other-worldly beings while his divisible self travels abroad. As these beings arrive in the shaman's husk, all members of the community may greet them by putting their arms around them or giving them cigarettes or drink. This is done separately by women, sometimes in groups, and by men. Throughout the ceremony the chief link between the sexually divided community is the shaman or the gods in the shaman's husk upon whom both sexes are focusing

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